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F R E E

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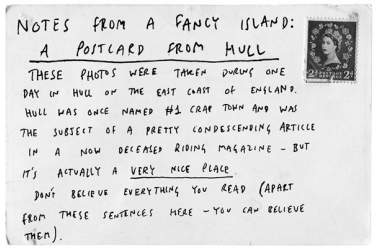




Clockwise from top:
Gaz Hunt, Tom Sanders, Clarky, Wozzy

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These photos are from Sam Waller's column, "Notes From A Fancy Island." See next page for some more photos and words about Hull, England.







Left: Tommy Gore **Right:** Addy Snowdon (These photos and and that postcard over to the left are all by Sam Waller from his column, "Notes From A Fancy Island."

"I used to ride for Redline."

SCRAPPIN

Words and photo by Bob Scerbo

When released in 1993 Homeless *Trash* set a blueprint for the future of street riding, and like most things that are revolutionary it took awhile for the new concepts to catch on. Gap to grinds were toyed with, tires started touching rails, a double peg to 180 and turndown happened down a rail and so on. One that really stood out to me was the rail on the wall icepick. How did his bars not hit? How did his pedal not hit? What would possess someone to think this was a good idea? It remained an obscure trick for a long time. Will Taubin in Base Brooklyn's *Neighborhood Superheroes* is the next one that comes to mind before it became a common concept. As of late, Elf (Shawn Walters) seems to have made this trick his own and is constantly pushing the limits with it. In this photo he pays homage, 25 years later, on the same rail Lee Sultimier invented it on in Austin, Texas.



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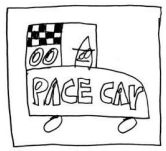
Conor Hobbs | Newburyport, MA | by Ryan Martin

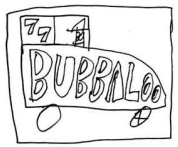
INTRO BUST

A summer issue of a BMX "megazine." It should either make you want to go ride or maybe take a break from riding and chill out for a minute. Both of those scenarios seem appropriate. There isn't anything particularly "summery" about this issue, but that's okay, because as I've gotten older, I've realized that all of the best aspects of summer — freedom, relaxation, long days and late nights — are really just a state of mind; you can feel that way anytime of the year. Summer just lends itself well to all of that stuff. That being said, summer can be such a special time. Stay out a little later, call out sick to work, and if it feels right, do that thing you said you'd do "this summer." Or, just chill out. Summer is great for that too.

This issue feels a little different than the others — I took a break from the photographer interview and the "Spot Reference" columns — but it's a good one, if I do say so myself. The new format feels right (I thought the last issue had some growing pains) and there's some great contributions from all over (International BMX Media Conglomerate™) not to mention an interview with Mat Hoffman about his backyard ramp, and ramps in general. Thanks to Chester Jones for that. And while I'm at it, thanks to everyone that's involved: the contributors, the sponsors, the subscribers and everyone that helps out in anyway.







Jack Leonard drew all of these cars that you'll see throughout the issue and I (Nick) took the photos of weird skateparks



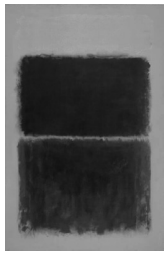


"I COULD DO THAT."

By Kris Kim

Those four words are the most offensive for any person in the creative profession. It's to gesture that the speaker who has no experience, knowledge, or even basic idea to what is being analyzed is on a equal level to whomever this most offensive phrase is uttered towards. In my personal opinion it is literally the worst comment someone could say, because it's not a miscommunication of thoughts or ideas, as if someone mistook the general meaning of the piece of work that is being commented on. It's to trivialize it and strip it away of any type of depth. It's to look at it in the most shallow way and judge it solely on surface value like how it was created or implemented. It diminishes the value of the artist's process from which a lot creativity arises. It's the worst, but you hear it all the time.

I associate Mark Rothko with this flawed thought. If you don't recognize his name you will probably recognize his work. He's the guy who paints a few crappy squares in different colors and it sells for millions. The funny thing is Mark Rothko would probably have died much richer if he could get a penny from everybody that said saw his work and uttered "I could do that." He'd make another double for phrases like "this is why I don't like modern art." I'm not gonna bore you with details of his exact process on how he came to create works like that but I will say he has long documented history with painting. The idea behind these Late-period Rothko paintings, the crappy squares, is that he strips away any type of symbols that'd gesture what the painting is about. In real life they are very large and it envelopes you in a similar way movies do when seen in a theatre compared to watching it on your laptop. You're sucked into these color schemes and whatever emotion you feel is what it is about. Often times we can attribute certain colors to certain emotions because of human nature. Red has a way of arousing strong emotions because of it's obvious connection with blood, black/darkness, white/light, blue/ocean. But he's not painting any of these colors to mean those things but to arouse the very same emotions caused by these objects we attribute to those colors. Even the names (e.g. *Light Red Over Black*) of all these paintings are nothing but what colors they represent, further isolating the viewer from trying to guess the artist intentions, allowing them to experience color in its most honest form solely on that. If he called his red painting *Fire*, we'd all sit there and think about what fire means,distracting the viewer from what it really is about. If you judged the technical aspects of the paintings,yeah it's not hard and yeah, a lot of people could do that. But the idea behind the paintings and Rothko's ability to push the medium of painting, that was revolutionary and that's why it sells for millions and no, very few people could do that.



BMX has its fair share of "I could do that" comments. Someone like Garrett Reynolds will never get it. He's so beyond technically proficient, it would be like someone looking at an artist who created something so life like that the average viewer couldn't even fathom what's in front of them (much like Garrett's riding) but immediately know that, no, they could not do that. But not all of BMX is that technical. I remember reading a comment on the internet and being offended when a younger generation rider said Ian Schwartz was wack. I remember this specifically cause it was that stupid. Some kid who has 4 plastic pegs and a freecoaster is saying Ian Schwartz is wack cause he can do half the tricks that Ian did. This could very well be true. A lot of Ian's signature tricks seem pretty basic to today's intermediate riders: fakie bar variations, fakie manuals, crank arm grinds, etc.. But much like Rothko, there is context that seems lost on anyone who didn't grow up in that Ian Schwartz generation.



When Schwartz took a freecoaster to the streets, no one* rode a freecoaster outside of flatland and a few old heads in the Midwest skatepark scene. The idea of riding one on street was generally inconceivable. And what's important to remember is that Ian rode the same Poverty freecoaster hub that was available from Dan's Comp. Sure, Ian modified it to make it work better but that's his own ingenuity, something a lot of people in BMX are perfectly capable of doing. I'd argue that every single one of his tricks were done already on flatland or cassette. So why is it so innovative? It's not that his tricks were necessarily new, because remember, this is the "I could do that" article and people already did what he did. Fakie riding did exist. People were half cabbing down stuff, they were doing half cab bars in lines. It all existed, but the idea that fakie riding could develop further didn't hit the mainstream. Others definitely had the idea but were unable to figure out how to pursue it. Cassettes had very real limitations. It's more restricting than going forwards. It's not like skateboarding where you're switching up your stance. You are literally being forced to pedal backwards to move backwards. Pedal pressure kills any speed needed to achieve certain fluidity in the trick presentation and presentation is everything. When Ian donned the freecoaster, it wasn't an overnight hit. He had the odd freecoaster move but it was like seeing someone do a front brake trick; it was more novelty than anything else. It's when his riding style progressed to completely utilize the freecoaster that he presented the world a new dimension of street riding. It was the realization that freecoaster street riding has enough variables and untapped potential that someone could film a whole section and become a world renowned rider by simply being able to tap into the basics before everyone else. The same applies with the crankarms he did. That was another near extinct trick before his popularity made it a mainstream one.

This random trashposter downplayed Ian's riding and probably wasn't even trolling. Honestly, what do you expect though? Just like the rest of world see's Rothko through their limited perspective, one could very well attribute that limited perspective to Ian's riding. Often times "I could do that" is rebuked simply by the saying "but you didn't." Because a "but you didn't" doesn't discredit that the person could've done the same, it suggests a certain unknown deficiency in being able to. It's grouping that person to the same level of everyone else. Just as "I could do that" relegates the activity in question of any type of special quality, "but you didn't" relegates the commenter of any type of special quality.

*Yes, we at *Challenger* know other people (Shout out to Kri Schmidt!) were riding freecoasters, but not pushing it on street like Ian Schwartz.

"My cousing used to ride for GT back in the day. He can wheelie soooo far and I heard he did a backflip. Can you do a backflip?"

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Mike Alewine | Florida, Dah | by James Flanders

OBT BMX

By James Flanders

Orange Blossom Trail: A seven mile stretch of US 441 running North to South through West Orlando. Once touted as Central Florida's scenic route, OBT offered family friendly roadside attractions, motels, and the beauty of its Orange groves throughout the post WW2 travel boom of the 50s and 60s. This fleeting oasis passed as quickly as the vacationing motorists rolling through.

Over the next two decades South OBT (south of Colonial Drive) took a considerable shift towards the seedy. Fueled by school redistricting, a population boom, the crack cocaine epidemic. The neighborhoods of Holden Heights and Paramore became home to over 46 adult entertainment establishments. The quaint hotels gave way to hourly rate lodging for prostitutes and johns. Drug and sex trafficking ran rampant.

North of Colonial the Trail changed considerably as well. The orange groves that once allured vacationers were sold for industrial development. The area began to look as it does now, marked by mutely toned industrial warehouses, commercial construction retail fronts, and sprawling nondescript industrial parks. Tucked away in that sprawl is Town and Country Manufactured Home Community and the brothers Mike Alewine and James Patterson.



James Patterson | Florida, Dah | by James Flanders

These Trail Bosses have honed their craft on the flat ledges, flat gaps and other featureless Florida spots that define OBT and greater Central FL. They never let a "non-spot" get away and have no problem scraping to keep up the session and good times. Their sheer will to make BMX happen, no matter the obstacles in the streets or life, tell me the soil on the trail is still rich enough to produce a ripe young crop of Central Florida's freshest.

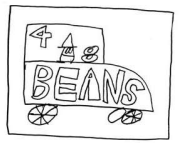
THE CURVATURE COUNSEL: MAT HOFFMAN'S BACKYARD RAMP

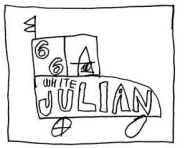
"I FOUND THIS PLACE THAT DOESN'T HAVE ANY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION SO YOU CAN DO WHATEVER YOU WANT."

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Ben Linschoten | Denver, CO | by Joshua Lucero









Interview and illustration by Chester Jones

As freestyle's frontman, Mat Hoffman ponders at his perch in the Oklahoma countryside just like you, me, and the other kid down the street that has ever nailed a two by four and a piece of plywood together.

A pioneer of plywood painting airs at heights previously unseen to the human eye. The Curvature Counsel cracked a few questions in Mat's direction and from what we can gather, he's just as psyched as ever. From our brief talk, the sky is not the limit for Mat Hoffman.

What were you doing when you were designing the backyard vert ramp? Explain some of your process of building your OKC kingdom, compared to say; when you built The Secret Ninja Ramp?

It's a portable vert ramp from some shows I did at Universal Studios and I set it up at my old house to find out I have a neighbourhood association that didn't approve of it. I called them the hypocrisy democracy, who came up with all these bylaws where you couldn't have swing sets and pools and stuff. So I put my vert ramp up, and they're like "when are you going to take it down?" They were a bunch of lawyers in suits calling me in for a meeting and I'm just like ya know I don't belong here; I know when to pick my battles, I'm just gonna find another place to live. So I found this place that doesn't have any neighbourhood association so you can do whatever you want, live however you want. So, I put up my ramp here with Gary Laurent; he always helps me put up the ramps and then we extended it and put the roll in up and had some locals come help me with that. I built the ramp here first and it took me a few years to renovate the place, and renovations basically turned into tearing it down and rebuilding the house, (laughs).



So how high is the ramp?
Let's see here, thirteen feet tall, eEleven foot tranny, and two feet of vert.

And how wide is it?

It's forty feet wide, but I have another thirty feet of ramp but I'll hit these trees so I was thinking of moving the ramp to another spot on my property that has a little bit more space but it's so nice and cozy in that spot; it's kinda like a tree fort how it is. But if I really wanted to I could make a seventy foot wide ramp which would be amazing.

So that's the same skeleton of the ramp for the for Universal?

Yeah, I had another show come up that I was producing for Magic Mountain theme park and had G-Ramp out of Germany manufacture the ramp in Hungary. I've never put them together, but they're supposed to be the same dimensions and everything but yeah, I dream to put 'em together some day.

What's the length of the flat bottom? Roll in dimensions?
You know, I think it's sixteen feet but I don't know, that's the standard but I don't know if that's true. I should go measure it but yeah I'll get back to ya on that.

The roll in, I just kinda rigged it up; I think it's six and half feet higher than coping. I took metal ramp parts, flipped the transitions upside down so it's kinda a custom build from scraps, (laughs), it's so wobbly, you get up there and I can shake it a foot to either side.

The coping sticks out an eighth to a quarter inch, standard two inch diameter coping.

Where's the sweet spot?

You know, with these big transitions they kinda go from a swing set sweet spot to like a rope swing sweet spot, so there's not really a defined sweet spot, it's like whenever you're riding an eight feet quarter, the whole centre of the ramp is the sweet spot, but with a bigger transition the sweet spot is the pump, which you're always kinda inside it, and it's just you can't really pump it because it's so slow; so the faster you go, the sweeter it gets. That's why the roll in makes my life so much easier because before when I'd roll in from the deck I'd pump a few walls where I'm six to eight feet and then I'm tired. So with the roll-in it just serves it up to me on a platter; it gives me all the speed and puts me right in that sweet spot and I don't even have to try. I just hold on and do a few walls, have energy and fly out. I don't even have to try anymore, it's like my old age session style (laughs).

How has having a backyard ramp changed since your first one that your uncle built? Biggest difference between say building the secret ninja to this backyard ramp?

Building the secret ninja, it was kinda before ramps had evolved into what they are today. So we were still trying to figure out, what is the master plan? Ya know. So I'd do 9' 3" tranny with 1' 3" of vert (laughs) and then skaters were riding 9' trannies with 2' of vert and it just seemed like too much vert. And now I've found out that if you have an 11' tranny grooved with 2' of vert it makes it all flow and you don't have a big kink at the top and skaters and bikers like the same tranny. It's a different finesse of how you ride, you don't really pump; you're really light and you can adjust your pop with your pinky. But the 9' with 2' was way too hard and it took the bigger trannies to even out the 2' of vert for BMX. And everyone's happy, we've come to the conclusion.

The amount of vert on big ramps always perplexed me, what's the steepest ramp you've ridden?

Hmmm, the one that sticks out in my mind, and if we went and rode it today it'd seem really small but back in the early days the big blue ramp in Houston that Jeff would ride a lot. 2hip had a contest on it, in 87' I think, that ramp just seemed insane, but it was because it was back then, it'd be tiny now.

I did ride the SMP vert ramp in China which was 16' tall with 2,5' of vert which was pretty RAD. It was 100' wide and you could just dead sprint on the deck and dive in. With big trannies like that you need the speed otherwise you can't pump it, and you can't really respond to the transition unless you're going 10' above it.

Your conversations with Johnny Airtime were super influential to your understanding of G-force and your quest for high air. Do you still talk w/ Airtime?
Yeah I talked with him when we did *The Birth of Big Air* but I haven't spoke to him since then. But yeah, he showed me how you could use math as your first guinea pig. Ya know, ya don't have to just charge something, see what happens and pick yourself up, heal and go at it again. You can figure out the physics to it, and it'll tell if something is possible. That was some impressive education for me.

Wow, optimal accelerations to the 20" wheel. That's what we wanna catalog with The Curvature Counsel.

He'd figure out these crazy formulas, where he'd end up hitting a jump ramp and have a pickup truck driving next to him driving at 50 something miles per hour, jump 150' and then land in the pickup. Am I'm just like "whaaat, how in the hell would you ever figure that out with all the wind variables and everything," that's insane, that you could calculate something so perfect like that and pull it.

Are vert ramps tapped? Is there potential to build a better ramp with more optimal proportions to the 20" wheel? Perhaps freestyle is the answer yeah!?

Well ya know a couple years ago I went and rode Danny's ramp, which was 30' tall. 30' elliptical transition, so it went from 30' to 25' and what that did was, ya know when you're going up a massive ramp your highest speed is at the centre of a ramp, the bigger the ramp, the less G you have at the lip, so if you make a 30' tall ramp with a 25' elliptical radius, the ramp comes at you 5' quicker, where it takes your G's and equates them out for you so you feel one constant G-force. So now, the ramp is like a big hill, one force all the way up and you try and neutralize the G all the way up the ramp when you pop of coping and you build up (air). When you roll into a huge ramp like that, you don't really know what the rhythm of the ramp is going to be and so sometimes you miss the rhythm and dead sailor 30' in the air. With the elliptical ramp the rhythm was so constant, I left the coping centered and in control.

Wow, thanks for schooling me on this constant G-force. Did the ramp have 5' of vert on it then?

No, I think it had 2.5' or 3' of vert, but what Danny did was he jumped a 40' step down then hit the 30' quarter and was worried about casing the ramp so he put an 8' extension to the side, set back 8" to catch him like a net. He had it really tech. But I just kept over on the 30' ramp, the one thing I found when you do pop off the lip too hard and you come down, now your G's are so hard coming in midtranny that you can't hold yourself up. And the force collapsed me and it knocked me off and fractured my collarbone and so you can't land low on an elliptical 30' ramp if you're going 25' above it. Note to self (laughs).

Too sweet, well hell yea Mat, appreciate your time; blue skies and happy landings man.

Thanks man, peace out!

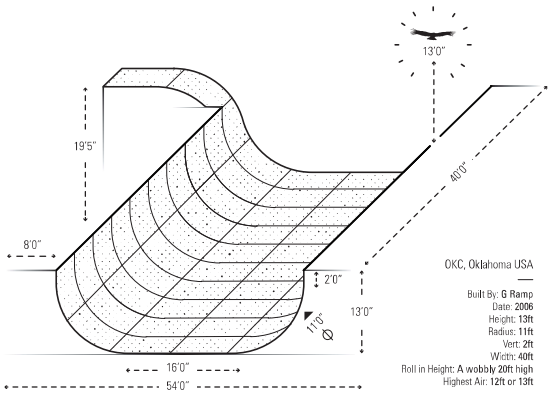
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Challenger
BMX Magazine



Ukrainian Village
Chicago IL
773-542-3279

"Why is that crank so small?"



OKC, Oklahoma USA

Built By: G Ramp
Date: 2006
Height: 13ft
Radius: 11ft
Vert: 2ft
Width: 40ft
Roll in Height: A wobbly 20ft high
Highest Air: 12ft or 13ft

THE CURVATURE COUNSEL	*CUM VIRES CURVAS*	N
SPECIMEN: Mat Hoffman's Backyard Ramp		SCALE- 1/16":1'0"

10'0" 20'0" 30'0" 40'0" 50'0"

BOOK REVIEWS

By Nick Ferreira

***The Pleasures And Sorrows Of Work* by Alain De Botton, 2010**

Unless you got mad mystery money, chances are you gotta work at some point in your life. There's different approaches to incorporate work into your life, some more sustainable than others. For some they want to be sure they are "fulfilled," "happy," and doing "something that matters." Others would rather just do whatever they need to do to collect that paycheck and pursue their hobbies untied to money. I'm sure there are benefits to both.

It's rare to hear others reflect on work beyond the typical "I hate my job" or conversely, bragging about their job. In this title, Alain de Botton goes deep into what it means to work, why we do what we do, and just how weird of a concept work really is. de Botton takes on this task by profiling workers like rocket scientists, artists, biscuit manufacturers (this takes place in the UK), accountants, and well, you get the idea. Perhaps the best aspect of the book is the regard and sympathy de Botton holds and feels for workers; the biscuit plant line worker is treated the same as the rocket scientist. De Botton can be flowery with his language but this passage sums up the book quite well:

"But we should be wary of restricting the idea of meaningful work too tightly, of focusing only on the doctors, the nuns of Kolkata, or the Old Masters. There can be less exalted ways to contribute to the furtherance of the collective good and it seems making a perfectly formed stripey chocolate circle which helps to fill an impatient stomach in the long morning hours between nine o'clock and noon, may deserve its own secure, if microscopic, place in the pantheons of innovations designed to alleviate the burdens of existence."

***In Pursuit Of Silence: Listening For Meaning In A World Of Noise* by George Prochnik, 2010**

A nice title that walks us through something we probably don't think about that often, noise (and silence). This book is a nice reminder that no matter where you live, sound is around you. Standout chapters: finding silence in New York City's "pocket parks" (those small parks built on private buildings so developers can build bigger and therefore fulfill their public space requirement, usually home to good spots), the chapter about wicked loud sound systems in cars, and one devoted to Muzak/retail music. Really, it's worth the look for the loud car systems chapter, titled "Soundkill," alone. Here's a choice quote:

"Even watching Tommy, the King of Bass, move from a distance, one knew oneself to be in the presence of a master of something. A handsome, mildly pumped-up man in his thirties, wearing a black Explosive Sound and Video T-shirt and a matching black baseball cap with the brim reversed, he had that hunter's poise, the charged balance - of complete alertness and utter relaxation- the self-assured élan of a successful professional athlete who knows his body will perform exactly as it has to when it has to. Only in this case that body is prosthetic, the chassis of a low-slung 1995 Izuzu packed with enough audio equipment to kill by sound alone."



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Soundtrack: sunset wilson sessions, Hockney at The Met, finishing this issue, Hiroshi Yoshimura *Green*, Destroyer, 2 Chainz "Proud" video, Lucky Dragons, T-Pain on Tiny Desk, Haruomi Hosono *Watering a Flower*

HOUSTON HIP-HOP RESEARCH COLLECTION

AN INTERVIEW WITH JULIE GROB

By Nick Ferreira

Can you introduce yourself and tell me what your role is at the University of Houston's Special Collections?

My name is Julie Grob, and I work in Special Collections, the department of the University of Houston Libraries where we collect and preserve rare books and archival materials. My title is Coordinator for Instruction; I work with faculty who want to bring their students to experience our materials as part of their learning. I'm also the founder and curator of the Houston Hip Hop Research Collection.

How did the library happen upon archiving the collection?

Back in 2010, I proposed to the library that we begin collecting materials related to Houston hip hop music and culture. Houston is a major center for hip hop, and UH is the second most diverse research university in the country. So it made a lot of sense for us in terms of preserving the work of influential Houston-based figures like the late DJ Screw, and diversifying our collections to better reflect our community. Once I had approval to begin developing the collection, I started to reach out to people who had connections to the families of DJ Screw and the late rapper HAWK, and to artists like K-Rino and Lil' Keke. When I told people in the hip hop community about the library's plans, there was a lot of enthusiasm because UH was acknowledging the impact of artists who had at times been overlooked in the mainstream narrative of hip hop.

Can you talk about why the hip-hop collection is worthy of being a special collection?

Absolutely. It is important that we preserve the papers of those who have been culturally influential, regardless of whether their art is considered high culture or popular culture. And DJ Screw's chopped and screwed production style launched a new sound in hip hop, one which continues to be emulated by artists and producers around the country today. Hip hop culture is also important because, prior to the ubiquity of the Internet, it exhibited a regional style that really reflected the way people lived, dressed, and spoke in different places. New Orleans bounce is different from Houston chopped and screwed, and different cities and regions have their own slang. I would add that special collections and archives haven't always done a good job of documenting the stories of African Americans and people from other racial and ethnic groups, and hip hop is a way to do that.

UH is a public institution. Have you ever faced backlash from the public about including hip-hop in the university's libraries?

We have received tons of positive feedback from the community about documenting Houston hip hop, and a miniscule amount of negative feedback. I think most people understand what we are trying to do and why it's important, and embrace it. It's very important to us that we share these resources with the general public and the fans, so we've digitized a number of materials from the hip hop collections, which can be found in the UH Digital Library at https://digital.lib.uh.edu/

Were you always a fan of Houston hip-hop? Who is your favorite artist?

I grew up listening to underground rock, and didn't listen to much hip hop. I became a fan of Houston hip hop once I started working on the collection. I love DJ Screw's underground mixtapes. Each mixtape tells a story. There is the selection of commercially recorded songs that are on the tape, and the way that DJ Screw altered them through slowing them down and adjusting the pitch, and repeating certain parts. There is the element of the individual who requested that the tape be made, typically for a specific event like a birthday. That individual would often come freestyle on their tape, in many cases bringing along a group of friends who also rapped. Then there is the part of the story that takes place in the shout-outs to different people and neighborhoods. Each completed tape was dubbed and the copies sold directly to fans. It's fascinating to put the different strands of the story together while you listen.



Frosty Ice. *Pace Master drawing* - Front. approximately 1986 - approximately 1987. Special Collections, University of Houston Libraries. University of Houston Digital Library. Web. June 21, 2018.

The collection is so vast- t-shirts, digital files, photographs, etc - what do you think is your favorite item, or collection of items, in the collection?

My favorite collection of items is probably the rhyme books of HAWK of the Screwed Up Click. He was one of the talented rappers who appeared on many of DJ Screw's mixtapes. The rhyme books are notebooks filled with his handwritten rap lyrics, which are interspersed with things like phone numbers and scores for dominoes games. Looking through them feels very personal, and they're a treasure trove for research on hip hop lyrics.

Houston hip-hop has seen a mainstream resurgence of sorts in the past few years. Have you seen an increase in interest with artists like ASAP Rocky and Drake referencing the scene?

Over the past few years we've had more graduate students coming in to do serious research using our collections. But I think that has more to do with people appreciating the uniqueness and longevity of Houston hip hop, DJ Screw in particular, than it does with the music of today's artists.

Do many classes specifically visit the hip-hop collection? How is the collection relevant to their studies?

We've had a number of classes use the Houston Hip Hop Research Collection, including classes on hip hop history and culture, modern and contemporary poetry, and the Black Arts Movement. Students really connect with the collection, and the materials spark their interest and generate excitement about hip hop, archives and research. And that's what we're here to do!



"How high can you J-hop?"





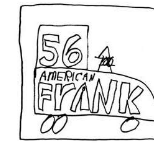
PROUDLY MADE IN THE USA

LEARN HOW TO HAVE FUN: FORGET ABOUT SHIT

by Anonymous

This one works on a few different levels y'all, so bear with me for a hot sec. First off, forgetting about shit generally makes your life way easier. Sure, you don't wanna forget your daughter's birthday, that's not a good look. DUH. But like, forgetting to mow the lawn? That's fuckin sick, bru. Especially if you do something way cooler like drawing a cat or playing frisbee. You know, fun stuff.

On some other shit though, it's also a hot look to forget bigger things. Like that time your homie made out with your ex-girlfriend cause he's got some weird competitive shit going on or is just a fucking dumbass. Or when you got passed over for a promotion cause you wore sneakers to work too much, and your boss is obsessed with appearances. Stuff like that. Better to just leave it in the past. Matter of fact, and I'm just thinking out loud here, I'm finna forget about my whole damn childhood and live in the moment. Sorry to trip out on y'all like that. Just try'na have fun, yo.



"Your bike is mad light, kid."



IN THE DEEP END

By Brian Tunney

Craig Grasso stalls a no-footed abubaca on top of a shopping cart at the Fatburger Banks on PCH in Redondo Beach, as shot by Spike Jonze in 1988. And below is not the actual bank in the Grasso photo but it's the bank that would be under Grasso's foot in the original photo, near the back of the building. (I tried cropping the actual bank into this square and it just looked like a random piece of pavement, but I can assure you that it's the same location.) These days, I feel like modern BMX is all about the trick being pulled on video, with style, execution and the various characters within BMX taking a backseat to the trick getting done. And that approach kinda sucks. I want to see the characters in BMX, I want to see the various styles, and if it comes with a sick new trick, even better. *Freestylin'* Magazine understood that, and pushed Craig Grasso's riding and personality onto the readers because he wasn't just there to pull the trick -- he was a character, with style, that was pushing BMX in a new direction.

BMX STREET SCENE REPORT

By Rory James O'Toole



Make: Mongoose
Model: Full Custom
Notes: Ape hanger handle bars, Handlebar mounted water bottle holder, Gyro removed, Breaks fully functional, Extra tall seat post, 44 tooth solid aluminum sprocket, full bash guard, 1 piece cranks, two rear pegs, Red marbled paint, Bike surf ready frame.



Seamus Mckeon | Asheville, NC | by Luis Pinzon

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By Nick Ferreira

Reading UK BMX magazines as a kid I saw the trick I knew as "abubaca" referred to as a "blunt," a reference to the skateboard stall/grind no doubt. It confused me and was an early introduction to geographical slang and dialects. But looking back now, it also seemed like a way to prop BMX up to the same cultural pedestal that skateboarding is on. The term "blunt" wouldn't be the first time BMX borrowed a trick name from skateboarding but that's not really the point of this. This is a reminder of how important a BMX trick named something as bizarre as abubaca is.

When we refer to abubaca as blunt it is a reminder of the self-hate that many BMXers have. We shouldn't hate that BMX isn't as "cool" as skateboarding because it is, in fact, just as "cool" as skateboarding and a term like abubaca reminds us why. BMX has kooks, adrenaline junkies, tough guys, softies, and, perhaps most importantly, a sense of humor. At the end of the day, it doesn't need to be put on a pedestal like skateboarding. When you call an abubaca an abubaca, you can own how weird, and cool, BMX really is.

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Same thing over here as on the left of Page 6: these sponsors shelled out money to help with the cost of printing and getting this distributed. It's amazing, really, to think these shops shops and companies (and the previous sponsors) are willing to do that. Thanks to all of them and, when it comes time to buy something new, please consider these companies and shops. They don't have to sponsor this thing and their willingness to support a grassroots project like this shouldn't be overlooked.

BERKS ST.

MASTHEAD

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Sam Waller
Clarky

Shine a light on the fake
This way my peeps can have it all



Clint Reynolds | NY | by Ryan Martin

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CCS: A PORTAL

By Patrick Klacza

I never really learned how to skate. Sure, I could roll around, ollie, and land a kickflip every now and again, but for the most part, I was just happy being a spectator. I liked hanging out at the skate park, drinking Slurpees, listening to Mental, and watching the kids who could skate. Above all else, I liked the clothes.

From 2001-2004, I worshipped CCS, the monthly mail-order catalog featuring the newest decks, trucks, wheels, grip tape, risers, bearings, and other assorted hardgoods you need to skate. But for me – and from what I understand, the majority of CCS's readers – the catalog's main draw was the shoes and clothes. So many t-shirts, hoodies, and sneakers, all lined up in rows, all available for purchase. That is, if you could scrounge up enough cash, convince your parents to write a check, and mail it, in good faith, to California.



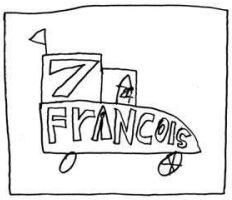
I did that once. I bought a Darkstar deck, Spitfire wheels, Independent trucks, and Bones bearings. A "complete" as they say. Six weeks later, it arrived at my house exactly as I pictured it, and so began my short-lived skateboarding career.

But back to the clothes. The graphics totally captured my imagination. The Toy Machine monster, Zero skull, and Blind grim reaper–I'm sure some of you can picture them now–they suggested a world light years away from suburban Illinois, a world of adventure and inefable cool. I wanted to be a part of that world. But of course, it was all in my imagination, unobtainable.

I never did cop any apparel from CCS. The clothes I wore, I gleaned off friends, bought at the mall, or received as presents. But CCS informed everything. Whenever the catalog arrived in the mail, I'd spend hours poring over it, picking out my favorite designs, imagining what it might be like to have a closet full of Shorty's, Alien Workshop, and Birdhouse gear.

Does this make me a poser? A bandwagoner? A tourist of skateboarding culture? Probably, but I prefer to give it a more optimistic spin. For a few years of my adolescence, CCS–and indeed, skateboarding at large–influenced me to a staggering degree. It was the portal through which I understood marketing and design, world-building and hype. It continues to influence me and the choices I make as an artist.

In 2014, CCS–now owned and operated by Foot Locker–announced that it was closing its doors. It seems that Foot Locker didn't know where its mail-order skateboard brand fit inside a market increasingly dominated by the internet. But that's not the end of the story. Not wanting to see CCS die and perhaps seeing a smart business decision, a Portland-based small business, Daddies Board Shop, acquired CCS from Foot Locker and began taking steps toward rehabbing the battered institution. After launching a digital version of the catalog, they recently revived the physical catalog as well. Will it capture the attention of skateboarding's new guard? Or is CCS 2.0 just another product of the thriving nostalgia industry? Whatever the case, I added my name to the mailing list this morning.

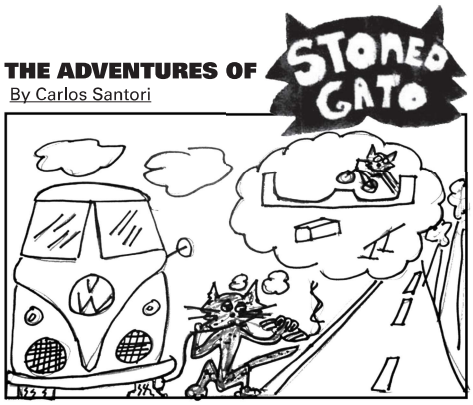


RIP Paul Buchanan
"Never doubt that an individual has the power to turn right into left, pain into happiness, and cities into fire."

...But sometimes individuals might not have that power. Tell your friends and family you love them.

THE ADVENTURES OF STONED GATO

By Carlos Santori



Stoned Gato, en route to the skatepark, gets a flat, but he has an idea...



Ian Tormey